

Finding the right blend

OFFERING A SINGLE ACCESS POINT TO IMPROVE THE STUDENT EXPERIENCE WITH BLACKBOARD

Founded in 1921, the prestigious Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore (Catholic University of the Sacred Heart) is the largest private university in Europe and the largest Catholic university in the world. Its 40,000+ students are distributed across five campuses, with the main campus located in Milan. The University offers 12 faculties, 43 three-year major tracks, 46 graduate level degrees, over 100 master tracks, 53 specializations and seven postgraduate schools.

Blackboard Learn: the strategic hub for blended learning

The Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore first invested in the Blackboard Learn e-learning platform in the year 2000, after having evaluated a number of proprietary and open source solutions. More than a decade later, the original initiative to position Blackboard Learn at the centre of its “blended learning” strategy has proven to be a tremendous success for the University:

- **Now more than 40% of undergraduate & graduate programmes in addition to 70% of specialist Master’s courses are available via Blackboard.**
- **Blackboard Learn social learning features (blogs, wikis, YouTube, Flickr and Slideshare) have engaged “Internet generation” students in the learning process using tools familiar to them.**
- **Using the Blackboard Grade Centre, faculty have realised significant time savings by allowing students to complete assignments online and tests to be automatically corrected. For students, the ability to quickly review their test results online gives them immediate feedback.**

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Flavia Scott
eLearning Program Manager
Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore

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- To help facilitate faculty training, the University “Ilab, Centre for Innovation” launched the “DidaTec Corner” initiative, a classroom series of workshops focusing on an array of educational technologies including Blackboard. With this added training, teachers are successfully experimenting with producing more innovative classroom materials and courses.
- Facilitating dynamic and easy access to academic services and online courses;
- Creating a single system where students can get personalised and relevant information, administrative services, communication and content related to their courses;
- Offering personalized and targeted integrated services;
- Improving access and user experience for both students and staff.
- Gaining timely information about student events and activities.

Giving students and faculty a single access point for all their information

After many successful years of using Blackboard Learn as its blended learning management system (LMS), The Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore has expanded the Blackboard investment to integrate its LMS and the SIS (Student Information Systems) together.

“Our goal has been to have a single point of entry portal with a single sign-on so that students could conveniently access not only online learning but many other services available to them through the University,” said Flavia Scott eLearning Program Manager at The Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore. “After much research we decided upon the Blackboard Community module as the ideal solution.”

Blackboard Community Engagement is the chosen platform for bringing I-CATT, the University online student services portal and Blackboard together in a single system. The Community Engagement module gives the University a great deal of flexibility to manage its user community in a way that fits with its goals and priorities, while offering a rich online experience that promotes easier online collaboration and campus communications.

Launched in May 2013, I-CATT acts as the gateway to vast resources of the University’s learning, teaching and administrative services. Through the additional tools in Blackboard Community Engagement, the Blackboard Learn solution goes well beyond online teaching and learning. It delivers a better, more customized user experience on every level.

On the administrative side, the Blackboard platform’s ability to integrate with the SIS database, has led to significant costs and time efficiencies through the automation of many of the tasks previously performed by the system administration staff. Instructors’ classes are created and posted by the instructors themselves and students enroll themselves into courses directly from within Blackboard. With only one system to maintain and a more intuitive user interface, system administrators have found their tasks to be simpler, faster, and with fewer technical problems to troubleshoot.

The verdict

“As a leading Italian university and a recognized member of the international scientific community it is important for us to stay at the forefront of e-learning. Over the years Blackboard’s Learn platform has proven to us that we made the right choice in positioning it at the heart of our strategy for blended learning” says Flavia Scott, eLearning Program Manager at the Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore. “Now having integrated the University online student services portal and Blackboard into a single, easy to access system, we are even more convinced that we stand at the forefront of Italian universities using technology to improve education.”

If you are interested to learn more on how Blackboard can help you and your organization increase the impact of education, please contact your account manager or visit us at blackboard.com.

